

A *COPY* of a
LETTER
WRITTEN
To a Gentlewoman
Newly Seduced to the
Church of *R O M E.*

By the Reverend *J. T. D. D.* late
Bishop of *Down* and *Connor.*

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*A Copy of a Letter written to a
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M. B.

I Was desirous of an opportunity in *London* to have discoursed with you concerning something of nearest concernment to you, but the multitude of my little affairs hindred me, and have brought upon you this trouble to read a long Letter, which yet I hope you will be more willing to do, because it comes from one who hath a great respect to your person, and a very great charity to your soul : I must confess I was on your behalf troubled when I heard you were fallen from the Communion of the Church of *England*, and entred into a voluntary, unnecessary schism, and departure from the Laws of the King, and the Communion of those with whom you have always lived in charity, going against those Laws in the defence and profession of which your Husband died, going from the Religion in which you were Baptized, in which for so many years, you lived piously and hoped for Heaven, and all this without any sufficient reason, without necessity or just scandal ministred to you ; and to aggravate all this, you did it in a time when the Church of *England* was persecuted, when she was marked with the Characterism of our Lord, the marks of the Cross of *Jesus*, that is, when she suffered for a holy cause and a holy conscience, when the Church of *England* was more glorious than at any time before ; Even when she could shew more Martyrs and Confessors than any Church this day in Christendom, even then when a King died in the profession of her Religion, and thousands of Priests, learned and pious Men suffered the spoiling of their goods rather

rather than they would forsake one Article of so excellent a Religion; So that seriously it is not easily to be imagined that any thing should move you, unless it be that which troubled the perverse Jews, and the Heathen Greek, *Scandalum crucis*, the scandal of the Cross; You stumbled at that Rock of offence, you left us because we were afflicted, lessened in outward circumstances and wrapped in a cloud; but give me leave only to remind you of that sad saying of the Scripture, that you may avoid the consequent of it; *They that fall on this stone shall be broken in pieces, but they on whom it shall fall shall be grinded to powder.* And if we should consider things but prudently, it is a great argument that the sons of our Church are very conscientious and just in their perswasions, when it is evident that we have no temporal end to serve, nothing but the great end of our souls, all our hopes of preferment are gone, all secular regards, only we still have truth on our sides, and we are not willing with the loss of truth to change from a persecuted to a prosperous Church, from a Reformed to a Church that will not be reformed; lest we give scandal to good people that suffer for a holy conscience, and weaken the hands of the afflicted; of which if you had been more carefull, you would have remained much more innocent.

But I pray, give me leave to consider for you, because you in your change considered so little for your self, what fault, what false doctrine, what wicked and dangerous proposition, what defect, what amiss did you find in the Doctrine and Liturgy and Discipline of the Church of England?

For its doctrine, It is certain it professes the belief of all that is written in the Old and New Testament, all that which is in the three Creeds, the Apostolical, the Nicene, and that of *Athanasius*, and whatsoever was decreed in the four General Councils, or in any other truly such, and whatsoever was condemned in these, our Church hath legally declared it to be Heresie. And upon these accounts above four whole ages of the Church went to Heaven; they baptized all their Catechumens into this faith, their hopes of Heaven was upon this and a good life, their
Saints

Saints and Martyrs lived and died in this alone, they denied Communion to none that professed this faith. This is the Catholick faith, so faith the Creed of *Athanasius*; and unless a company of Men have power to alter the faith of God, whosoever live and die in this faith, are intirely *Catholick* and *Christian*. So that the Church of *England* hath the same faith without dispute that the Church had for 400 or 500 Years, and therefore there could be nothing wanting here to saving faith, if we live according to our belief.

2. For the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, I shall not need to say much, because the case will be very evident; First, Because the disputers of the Church of *Rome* have not been very forward to object any thing against it, they cannot charge it with any evil: 2. Because for all the time of King *Edw 6.* and till the eleventh year of *Queen Elizabeth*, your people came to our Churches and prayed with us, till the Bull of *Pius Quintus* came out upon temporal regards, and made a Schism by forbidding the Queens Subjects to pray as by Law was here appointed, though the prayers were good and holy, as themselves did believe. That Bull enjoyned Recusancy, and made that which was an act of Rebellion, and Disobedience, and Schism, to be the character of your Roman Catholics. And after this, what can be supposed wanting in order to salvation? We have the Word of God, the Faith of the Apostles, the Creeds of the Primitive Church, the Articles of the four first general Councils, a holy Liturgy, excellent Prayers, perfect Sacraments, Faith and Repentance, the Ten Commandments, and the Sermons of Christ, and all the precepts and counsels of the Gospel; We teach the necessity of good works, and require and strictly exact the severity of a holy life; We live in obedience to God, and are ready to die for him, and do so when he requires us so to do; We speak honourably of his most holy Name, we worship him at the mention of his Name, we confess his Attributes, we love his Servants, we pray for all Men, we love all Christians, even our most erring Brethren, we confess our sins to God and to our Brethren whom we have offended, and to God's

Ministers in cases of Scandal, or of a troubled Conscience. We communicate often, we are enjoined to receive the holy Sacrament thrice every Year at least ; Our Priests absolve the penitent, our Bishops ordain Priests, and confirm baptized persons, and bless their people and intercede for them ; and what could here be wanting to Salvation ? what necessity forced you from us ? I dare not suspect it was a temporal regard that drew you away, but I am sure it could be no spiritual.

But now that I have told you, and made you to consider from whence you went, give me leave to represent to you, and tell you whither you are gone, that you may understand the nature and conditions of your change : For do not think your self safe, because they tell you that you are come to the Church ; You are indeed gone from one Church to another, from a better to a worse, as will appear in the induction ; the particulars of which before I reckon, give me leave to give you this advice ; if you mean in this affair to understand what you do ; it were better you enquired what your Religion is, than what your Church is ; for that which is a true Religion to day, will be so to morrow and for ever ; but that which is a holy Church to day, may be heretical at the next change, or may betray her trust, or obtrude new Articles in contradiction to the old, or by new interpretations may elude ancient truths, or may change your Creed, or may pretend to be the Spouse of Christ when she is idolatrous, that is, adulterous to God : Your Religion is that which you must, and therefore may competently understand ; You must live in it ; and grow in it, and govern all the actions of your life by it ; and in all questions concerning the Church, you are to choose your Church by the Religion, and therefore this ought first and last to be enquired after. Whether the Roman Church be the Catholick Church, must depend upon so many uncertain enquiries, is offered to be proved by so long, so tedious a method, hath in it so many intrigues and Labyrinths of Question, and is (like a long line) so impossible to be perfectly streight, and to have no declination in it when it is held by such a hand as yours, that unless it be by material

terial enquiries into the Articles of the Religion, you can never hope to have just grounds of confidence. In the mean time you can consider this ; if the Roman Church were the Catholick, that is, so as to exclude all that are not of her communion, then the Greek Churches had as good turn Turks as remain damned Christians, and all that are in the communion of all the other Patriarchal Churches in Christendom, must also perish like Heathens, which thing before any Man can believe, he must have put off all reason, and all modesty, and all charity ; And who can with any probability think that *the Communion of Saints* in the Creed is nothing but the *Communion of Roman Subjects*, and the Article of the Catholick Church was made up to dispark the inclosures of *Jerusalem*, but to turn them into the pale of *Rome*, and the Church is as limited as ever it was, save only that the Synagogue is translated to *Rome*, which I think you will easily believe was a Proposition the Apostles understood not. But though it be hard to trust to it, it is also so hard to prove it, that you shall never be able to understand the measures of that question, and therefore your salvation can never depend upon it. For no good or wise person can believe that God hath tied our Salvation to impossible measures, or bound us to an Article that is not by us cognoscible, or intends to have us conducted by that which we cannot understand ; and when you shall know that Learned men, even of the Roman party are not agreed concerning the Catholick Church that is infallibly to guide you, some saying that it is the virtual Church, that is, the Pope ; some, that it is the representative Church, that is, a Council ; Some, that it is the Pope and the Council, the virtual Church and the representative Church together ; Some that neither of these, nor both together are infallible ; but only, the essential Church, or the diffusive Church is the Catholick, from whom we must at no hand dissent ; you will quickly find your self in a wood, and uncertain whether you have more than a word in exchange for your soul, when you are told you are in the Catholick Church. But I will tell you what you may understand, and see and feel, something that your self can tell whether I say true or no concerning it. You

are now gone to a Church that protects it self by arts of subtilty and arms, by violence and persecuting all that are not of their minds, to a Church in which you are to be a Subject of the King so long as it pleases the Pope : In which you may be absolved from your Vows made to God, your Oaths to the King, your Promises to Men, your duty to your Parents in some cases : A Church in which Men pray to God, and to Saints in the same Form of words in which they pray to God, as you may see in the Offices of Saints, and particularly of our Lady : a Church in which Men are taught by most of the principal Leaders to worship Images with the same worship with which they worship God and Christ, or him or her whose Image it is, and in which they usually picture God the Father, and the holy Trinity, to the great dishonour of that sacred mystery, against the doctrine and practice of the Primitive Church, against the expresse doctrine of Scripture, against the honour of a Divine Attribute ; I mean, the immensity and spirituality of the Divine Nature ; You are gone to a Church that pretends to be Infallible, and yet is infinitely deceived in many particulars, and yet endures no contradiction, and is impatient her children should enquire into any thing her Priests obtrude. You are gone from receiving the whole Sacrament to receive it but half ; from Christ's Institution to a humane invention, from Scripture to uncertain Traditions, and from ancient Traditions to new pretences, from prayers which ye understood to prayers which ye understand not, from confidence in God to rely upon creatures, from intire dependence upon inward acts to a dangerous temptation of resting too much in outward ministeries, in the external work of Sacraments and of Sacramentals : You are gone from a Church whose worshipping is simple, Christian and Apostolical, to a Church where Mens consciences are loaden with a burden of Ceremonies greater than that in the days of the Jewish Religion (for the Ceremonial of the Church of *Rome* is a great Book in Folio) greater I say than all the Ceremonies of the Jews contained in *Leviticus*, &c. You are gone from a Church where you were exhorted to read the Word of God, the holy Scriptures from whence you found instruction,

tion, institution, comfort, reproof, a treasure of all excellencies, to a Church that seals up that fountain from you, and gives you drink by drops out of such Cisterns as they first make, and then stain, and then reach out: and if it be told you that some Men abuse Scripture, it is true, for if your Priests had not abused Scripture, they could not thus have abused you, but there is no necessity they should, and you need not, unless you list, any more than you need to abuse the Sacraments or decrees of the Church, or the messages of your friend, or the Letters you receive, or the Laws of the Land, all which are liable to be abused by evil persons, but not by good people and modest understandings. It is now become a part of your Religion to be ignorant, to walk in blindness, to believe the Man that hears your Confessions, to hear none but him, nor to hear God speaking but by him, and so you are liable to be abused by him, as he please, without remedy. You are gone from us, where you were only taught to worship God through Jesus Christ, and now you are taught to worship Saints and Angels with a worship at least dangerous, and in some things proper to God; for your Church worships the Virgin *Mary* with burning incense and candles to her, and you give her presents, which by the consent of all Nations used to be esteemed a worship peculiar to God, and it is the same thing which was condemned for Heresie in the *Collyridians*, who offered a Cake to the Virgin *Mary*; a Candle and a Cake make no difference in the worship; and your joyning God and the Saints in your worship and devotions, is like the device of them that fought for King and Parliament, the latter destroys the former. I will trouble you with no more particulars, because if these move you not to consider better, nothing can.

But yet I have two things more to add of another nature, one of which at least may prevail upon you, whom I suppose to have a tender and a religious Conscience.

The first is, That all the points of difference between us and your Church are such as do evidently serve the ends of Covetousness and Ambition, of Power and Riches, and so stand vehemently suspected of design, and art,

rather than truth of the Article and designs upon Heaven. I instance in the Pope's power over Princes and all the World; his power of Dispensation, The exemption of the Clergy from jurisdiction of Princes, The Doctrine of Purgatory and Indulgences which was once made means to raise a Portion for a Lady, the Niece of Pope *Leo* the Tenth; The Priests power advanced beyond authority of any warrant from Scripture, a doctrine apt to bring absolute obedience to the Papacy; but because this is possibly too nice for you to suspect or consider, that which I am sure ought to move you is this.

That you are gone to a Religion in which though through God's grace prevailing over the follies of men, there are I hope, and charitably suppose many pious Men that love God, and live good lives, yet there are very many doctrines taught by your Men, which are very ill Friends to a good life. I instance in your Indulgences and pardons, in which vitious men put a great confidence, and rely greatly upon them. The doctrine of Purgatory which gives countenance to a sort of Christians who live half to God and half to the World, and for them this doctrine hath found out a way that they may go to Hell and to Heaven too. The Doctrine that the Priests absolution can turn a trifling repentance into a perfect and a good, and that suddenly too, and at any time, even on our Death-bed, or the minute before your death, is a dangerous heap of falshood, and gives licence to wicked people, and teaches men to reconcile a wicked debauched life, with the hopes of Heaven. And then for penances and temporal satisfaction, which might seem to be as a plank after the shipwrack of the duty of Repentance, to keep men in awe, and to preserve them from sinking in an Ocean of Impiety, it comes to just nothing by your doctrine; for there are so many easie ways of Indulgences and getting Pardons, so many con-fraternities, stations, privileg'd Altars, little Offices, *Agnus Dei's*, amulets, hal-lowed devices, swords, roses, hats, Church-yards, and the fountain of these annexed Indulgences the Pope himself, and his power of granting what, and when, and to whom he list, that he is a very unfortunate man that needs to
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Smart with penances; and after all, he may choose to suffer any at all, for he may pay them in Purgatory if he please, and he may come out of Purgatory upon reasonable terms, in case he should think it fit to go thither; So that all the whole duty of *Repentance* seems to be destroyed with devices of Men that seek power and gain, and find error and folly; insomuch that if I had a mind to live an evil Life, and yet hope for Heaven at last, I would be of your Religion above any in the World.

But I forget I am writing a Letter: I shall therefore desire you to consider upon the premises, which is the safer way. For surely it is lawfull for a Man to serve God without Images; but that to worship Images is lawfull, is not so sure. It is lawfull to pray to God alone, to confess him to be true, and every Man a liar, to call no man Master upon Earth, but to rely upon God teaching us; But it is at least hugely disputable and not at all certain that any Man, or society of Men can be infallible, that we may put our trust in Saints, in certain extraordinary Images, or burn Incense and offer consumptive oblations to the Virgin *Mary*, or make vows to persons, of whose state, or place, or capacities, or condition we have no certain revelation: we are sure we do well when in the holy Communion we worship God and Jesus Christ our Saviour, but they who also worship what seems to be bread, are put to strange shifts to make themselves believe it to be lawfull. It is certainly lawfull to believe what we see and feel; but it is an unnatural thing upon presence of faith to disbelieve our eyes, when our sense and our faith can better be reconciled, as it is in the question of the real presence, as it is taught by the Church of *England*.

So that unless you mean to prefer a danger before safety, temptation to unholiness before a severe and a holy Religion, unless you mean to lose the benefit of your prayers by praying what you perceive not, and the benefit of the Sacrament in great degrees by falling from Christ's institution, and taking half instead of all, unless you desire to provoke God to jealousy by Images, and Man to jealousy in professing a Religion in which you may in
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many cases have leave to forfeit your faith and lawfull trust, unless you will still continue to give scandal to those good people with whom you have lived in a common Religion, and weaken the hearts of Gods afflicted ones, unless you will choose a Catechism without the second Commandment, and a Faith that grows bigger or less as men please, and a Hope that in many degrees relies on men and vain confidences, and a Charity that damns all the World but your selves; unless you will do all this, that is, suffer an abuse in your Prayers, in the Sacrament, in the Commandments, in Faith, in Hope, in Charity, in the Communion of Saints, and your duty to your Supreme, you must return to the bosom of your Mother the Church of *England* from whence you have fallen, rather weakly than maliciously, and I doubt not but you will find the Comfort of it all your Life, and in the Day of your Death, and in the Day of Judgment. If you will not, yet I have freed mine own Soul, and done an act of Duty and Charity, which at least you are bound to take kindly if you will not entertain it obediently.

Now let me add this, that although most of these objections are such things which are the open and avowed doctrines or practices of your Church, and need not to be proved as being either notorious or confessed; yet if any of your Guides shall seem to question any thing of it, I will bind my self to verifie it to a tittle, and in that too which I intend them, that is, so as to be an objection obliging you to return, under the pain of folly, or heresie, or disobedience, according to the subject matter. And though I have propounded these things now to your consideration, yet if it be desired I shall represent them to your eye, so that even your self shall be able to give sentence in the behalf of truth. In the mean time give me leave to tell you of how much folly you are guilty in being moved by such mock-arguments as your men use when they meet with women and tender consciences and weaker understandings.

The first is; where was your Church before *Luther*? Now if you had called upon them to speak something against your Religion from Scripture, or right Reason, or
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Universal Tradition, you had been secure as a Tortoise in her shell; a Cart pressed with sheaves could not have oppressed your cause or person, though you had confessed you understood nothing of the mysteries of succession doctrinal or personal. For if we can make it appear that our Religion was that which Christ and his Apostles taught, let the truth suffer what eclipses or prejudices can be supposed, let it be hid like the holy fire in the captivity, yet what Christ and his Apostles taught us is eternally true, and shall by some means or other be conveyed to us; even the enemies of truth have been conservators of that truth by which we can confute their errors. But if you still ask where it was before *Luther*? I answer it was there where it was after; even in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; and I know no warrant for any other Religion; and if you will expect I should shew any society of Men who professed all the doctrines which are now expressed in the confession of the Church of *England*; I shall tell you it is unreasonable; because some of our truths are now brought into our publick confessions that they might be oppos'd against your errors; before the occasion of which there was no need of any such confessions, till you made many things necessary to be professed, which are not lawfull to be believed. For if we believe your superinduc'd follies, we shall do unreasonably, unconscionably, and wickedly; but the questions themselves are so useless abstracting from the accidental necessity which your follies have brought upon us, that it had been happy if we had never heard of them more than the Saints and Martyrs did in the first ages of the Church; but because your Clergy have invaded the liberty of the Church, and multiplied the dangers of damnation, and pretend new necessities, and have introduc'd new Articles, and affright the simple upon new pretensions, and slight the very institution and the Commands of Christ and of the Apostles, and invent new Sacramentals constituting Ceremonies of their own head, and promise grace along with the use of them, as if they were not Ministers but Lords of the Spirit, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and make void the Commandment of God by

by their tradition, and have made a strange body of Divinity; therefore it is necessary that we should immure our Faith by the refusal of such vain and superstitious dreams: but our faith was completed at first, it is no other than that which was delivered to the Saints, and can be no more for ever.

So that it is a foolish demand to require that we should shew before *Luther* a systeme of Articles declaring our sense in these questions: It was long before they were questions at all; and when they were made questions, they remained so a long time; and when by their several pieces they were determined, this part of the Church was oppressed with a violent power; and when God gave opportunity, then the yoke was broken; and this is the whole progress of this affair. But if you will still insist upon it, then let the matter be put into equal ballances, and let them shew any Church whose Confession of Faith was such as was obtruded upon you at *Trent*: And if your Religion be *Pius Quartus* his Creed at *Trent*, then we also have a question to ask, and that is *Where was your Religion before Trent?*

The Council of *Trent* determined that the Souls departed before the Day of Judgment enjoy the Beatifical Vision. It is certain this Article could not be shewn in the Confession of any of the ancient Churches; for most of the Fathers were of another opinion. But that which is the greatest offence of Christendom is not onely that these doctrines which we say are false were yet affirmed, but that those things which the Church of God did always reject, or held as uncertain, should be made Articles of Faith, and so become parts of your Religion; and of these it is that I again ask the question which none of your side shall ever be able to answer for you: Where was your Religion before *Trent*? I could instance in many particulars; but I shall name one to you, which because the thing of it self is of no great consequence, it will appear the more unreasonable and intolerable that your Church should adopt it into the things of necessary belief, especially since it was only a matter of fact, and they took the false part too. For in the 21. Self. Chap.

4. it is affirmed, That *although the holy Fathers did give the Sacrament of the Eucharist to Infants, yet they did it without any necessity of salvation*; that is, they did not believe it necessary to their salvation, which is notoriously false, and the contrary is marked out with the black-lead of every man almost that reads their Works; and yet your Council says this is *sine controversiâ credendum*; to be believed without all controverſie: and all Christians forbidden to believe or teach otherwise. So that here it is made an Article of faith amongst you, that a man shall neither believe his reason nor his eyes: & who can shew any confession of Faith in which all the *Trent* doctrine was professed & enjoined under pain of damnation? and before the Council of *Constance*, the Doctrine touching the Popes power was so new, so decried, that as *Gerson* says, he hardly should have escaped the note of Heresie that would have said so much as was there defined: so that in that Article which now makes a great part of your belief, where was your Religion before the Council of *Constance*? and it is notorious that your Council of *Constance* determined the doctrine of the half communion with a *Non obstante* to Christ's institution, that is, with a defiance to it, or a noted, observed neglect of it, and with a profession it was otherwise in the Primitive Church. Where then was your Religion before *John Hus* and *Hierom* of *Prague's* time, against whom that Council was convened? But by this instance it appears most certainly that your Church cannot shew her confessions immediately after Christ, and therefore if we could not shew ours immediately before *Luther*, it were not half so much; for since you receded from Christ's Doctrine we might well recede from yours; and it matters not who or how many or how long they professed your doctrine, if neither Christ nor his Apostles did teach it; so that if these Articles constitute your Church, your Church was invincible at the first; and if ours was invincible afterwards, it matters not; *For yours was invisible in the days of light, and ours was invisible in the days of darkness.* For our Church was always visible in the reflections of Scripture, and he that had his eyes of faith

De Potest. Eccles. conf. 12.

faith and reason might easily have seen these truths all the way which constitute our Church. But I add yet farther, that our Church before *Luther* was there where your Church was, in the same place and in the same persons; for divers of the errors which have been amongst us reformed, were not the constituent Articles of your Church before *Luther's* time; for before the last Councils of your Church a man might have been of your Communion upon easier terms; and Indulgences were indeed a practice, but no Article of Faith before your men made it so, and that very lately, and so were many other things besides. So that although your men cozen the credulous and the simple by calling yours *The old Religion*, yet the difference is vast between Truth and their affirmative, even as much as between old Errors and new Articles. For although Ignorance and Superstition had prepared the ore, yet the Councils of *Constance* and *Basil*, and *Trent* especially, were the forges and the mint.

Lastly, If your men had not by all the vile and violent arts of the World stopped the mouths of dissenters, the question would quickly have been answered, or our Articles would have been so confessed, so owned and so publick, that the question could never been asked; but in despite of all opposition, there were great numbers of professors who did protest and profess and practice our doctrines contrary to your Articles; as it is demonstrated by the Divines of *Germany* in *Illyricus* his *Catalogus restium veritatis*, and in Bishop *Mortons* appeal.

But with your next objection you are better pleased, and your Men make most noise with it. For you pretend that by our confession, salvation may be had in your Church; but your men deny it to us; and therefore by the confession of both sides you may be safe, and there is no question concerning you; but of us there is great question, for none but our selves say that we can be saved.

I answer, 1. That salvation may be had in your Church, is it ever the truer because we say it? If it be not, it can add no confidence to you, for the proposition gets no strength by our affirmative. But if it be, then our authority is good or else our reason; and if either be, then

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we have more reason to be believed speaking of our selves; because we are concerned to see that our selves may be in a state of hope; and therefore we would not venture on this side if we had not greater reason to believe well of our selves than of you. And therefore believe us when it is more likely that we have greater reason, because we have greater concernments, and therefore greater considerations.

2. As much charity as your Men pretend us to speak of you, yet it is a clear case our hope of your salvation is so little that we dare not venture our selves on your side. The Burger of *Oldwater* being to pass a River in his Journey to *Daventry*, bad his Man try the Ford; telling him he hoped he should not be drowned, for though he was afraid the River was too deep, yet he thought his Horse would carry him out, or at least, the Boats would fetch him off. Such a confidence we may have of you, but you will find that but little warranty, if you remember how great an interest it is that you venture.

3. It would be remembred that though the best ground of your hope is not the goodness of your own faith, but the greatness of our charity; yet we that charitably hope well of you, have a fulness of assurance of the truth and certainty of our own way; and however you can please your selves with Images of things as having no firm footing for your trifling confidence, yet you can never with your tricks out-face us of just and firm adherencies; and if you were not empty of supports, and greedy of bulrushes, snatching at any thing to support your sinking cause, you would with fear and trembling consider the direct dangers which we demonstrate to you to be in your Religion rather than flatter your selves with collateral, weak, and deceitfull hopes of accidental possibilities, that some of you may escape.

4. If we be more charitable to you than you are to us, acknowledge in us the beauty and essential form of Christian Religion; be sure you love as well as make use of our charity; but if you make our Charity an argument against us, remember that you render us evil in exchange for good; and let it be no brag to you that you have not that charity to us; for therefore the Donatists were condemned

demned for Hereticks and Schismaticks because they damned all the world, and afforded no charity to any that was not of their Communion.

5. But that our charity may be such indeed, that is, that it may do you a real benefit, and not turn into Wormwood and Colloquintida, I pray take notice in what sense it is that we allow salvation may possibly be had in your Church. We warrant it not to any, we only hope it for some, we allow it to them as to the *Sadducees* in the Law, and to the *Corinthians* in the Gospel who denied the Resurrection; that is, till they were sufficiently instructed, and competently convinced, and had time and powers to out-wear their prejudices and the impresses of their education and long perswasion. But to them amongst you who can and do consider and yet determine for error and interest, we have a greater charity, even so much as to labour and pray for their conversion, but not so much fondness as to flatter them into boldness and pertinacious adherencies to matters of so great danger.

6. But in all this affair, though your men are very bold with God and leap into his Judgment-seat before him, and give wild sentences concerning the salvation of your own party and the damnation of all that disagree, yet that which is our charity to you, is indeed the fear of God, and the reverence of his judgments; we do not say that all Papists are certainly damn'd; we wish and desire vehemently that none of you may perish; but then this charity of judgment relates not to you, nor is derived from any probability which we see in your doctrines that differ from ours; but because we know not what rate and value God puts upon the Article; It concerns neither you nor us to say, this or that man shall be damn'd for his opinion; for besides that this is a bold intrusion into that secret of God which shall not be opened till the Day of Judgment, and besides that we know not what allays & abatements are to be made by the good meaning and the ignorance of the man; all that can concern us is to tell you that you are in error, that you depart from Scripture, that you exercise tyranny over Souls, that you
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leave the Divine institution, & prevaricate Gods Commandment, that you divide the Church without truth and without necessity, that you tye Men to believe things under pain of damnation which cannot be made very probable, much less certain; and therefore that you sin against God and are in danger of his eternal displeasure; but in giving the final sentence as we have no more to do than your men have, yet so we refuse to follow your evil example; and we follow the glorious precedent of our Blessed Lord; who decreed and declared against the crime, but not against the Criminal before the day. He that does this, or that, is in danger of the Council, or in danger of judgment, or liable, and obnoxious to the danger of hell fire, so we say of your greatest errors; t'ey put you in the danger of perishing; but that you shall or shall not perish, we leave it to your Judge: and if you call this charity, it is well, I am sure it is piety and the fear of God.

7. Whether you may be saved, or whether you shall be damned for your errors, does neither depend upon our affirmative nor your negative, but according to the rate and value which God sets upon things. Whatever we talk, things are as they are, not as we dispute, or grant, or hope; and therefore it were well if your men would leave abusing you and themselves with these little arts of indirect support. For many men that are warranted, yet do eternally perish, and you in your Church damn Millions who I doubt not shall reign with *Jesús* eternally in the Heavens.

8. I wish you would consider, that if any of our men say salvation may be had in your Church, it is not for the goodness of your new Propositions, but only because you do keep so much of that which is our Religion, that upon the confidence of that we hope well concerning you. And we do not hope any thing at all that is good of you or your Religion as it distinguishes from us and ours: we hope that the good which you have common with us may obtain pardon directly or indirectly, or may be an antidote of the venome, and an amulet against the danger of your very great errors, so that if you can derive any confidence from our concession, you must remember
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where it takes root ; not upon any thing of yours, but wholly upon the excellency of ours ; you are not at all safe, or warranted for being Papists, but we hope well of some of you, for having so much of the Protestant : and if that will do you any good, proceed in it, and follow it whithersoever it leads you.

9. The safety that you dream of which we say to be on your side, is nothing of allowance or warranty, but a hope that is collateral, indirect and relative ; we do not say any thing whereby you can conclude yours to be safer than ours, for it is not safe at all, but extremely dangerous ; we affirm those errors in themselves to be damnable, some to contain in them Impiety, some to have Sacrilege, some Idolatry, some Superstition, some practices to be conjuring and charming and very like to Witchcraft, as in your hallowing of Water, and baptizing Bells, and exorcizing Demoniacks ; and what safety there can be in these, or what you can fancy we should allow to you, I suppose you need not boast of. Now because we hope some are saved amongst you, you must not conclude yours to be safe ; for our hope relies upon this. There are many of your Propositions in which we differ from you, that Thousands amongst you understand and know nothing of ; it is to them as if they were not, it is to them now as it was before the Council, they hear not of it. And though your Priests have taken a course that the most ignorant do practise some of your abominations most grossly, yet we hope this will not be laid upon them who (as St. Austin's expression is) *cauta sollicitudine querunt veritatem, corrigi parati cum invenerint* : do according as they are able warily and diligently seek for truth, and are ready to follow it when they find it ; Men who live good lives, and repent of all their evils known and unknown. Now if we are not deceived in our hopes, these Men shall rejoyce in the eternal goodness of God, which prevails over the malice of them that misguide you ; but if we be deceived in our hopes of you, your Guides have abus'd you, and the blind leaders of the blind will fall together. For,

10. If you will have the secret of this whole affair, this it is. The hopes we have of any of you, (as it is known) principally relies upon the hopes of your repentance. Now we say that a Man may repent of an error which he knows not of; as he that prays heartily for the pardon of all his sins and errors known and unknown; by his general repentance may obtain many degrees and instances of mercy. Now thus much also your Men allow to us; those who live well, and die in a true though but general repentance of their sins and errors even amongst us, your best and wisest Men pronounce to be in a favorable condition. Here then we are equal, and we are as safe by your confession as you are by ours. But because there are some Bigots of your faction fierce and fiery who say that a general repentance will not serve our turns, but it must be a particular renunciation of Protestantcy; these men deny not only to us but to themselves too, all that comfort which they derive from our Concession, and indeed which they can hope for from the mercies of God. For be you sure we think as ill of your errors as you can suppose of our Articles; and therefore if for errors (be they on which side it chances) a general repentance will not serve the turn without an actual dereliction, then flatter not your selves by any thing of our kindness to your party; for you must have a particular, if a general be not sufficient. But if it be sufficient for you, it is so for us, in case we be in error as your men suppose us; but if it will not suffice us for remedy to those errors you charge us with, neither will it suffice you; for the case must needs be equal as to the value of repentance and malignity of the error: and therefore these men condemn themselves and will not allow us to hope well of them; but if they will allow us to hope, it must be by affirming the value of a general repentance; and if they allow that, they must hope as well of ours as we of theirs: but if they deny it to us, they deny it to themselves, and then they can no more brag of any thing of our concession. This only I add to this consideration; that your men do not, cannot charge upon us any doctrine that is in its matter and effect impious; there is nothing positive in our doctrine,

but is either true or innocent, but we are accus'd for denying your superstructures : ours therefore (if we be deceived) is but like a sin of omission ; yours are sins of commission in case you are in the wrong (as we believe you to be) and therefore you must needs be in a greater danger than we can be supposed, by how much sins of omission are less than sins of commission.

11. Your very way of arguing from our charity is a very fallacy and a trick that must needs deceive you if you rely upon it. For whereas your men argue thus : The Protestants say we Papists may be saved ; and so say we too : but we Papists say that you Protestants cannot, therefore it is safest to be a Papist ; consider that of this argument if it shall be accepted, any bold Heretick can make use, against any modest Christian of a true perswasion. For, if he can but out-face the modesty of the good man, and tell him he shall be damn'd ; unless that modest man say as much of him, you see impudence shall get the better of the day. But it is thus in every error. Fifteen Bishops of Jerusalem in immediate succession were circumcised, believing it to be necessary so to be : with these other Christian Churches who were of the uncircumcision did communicate. Suppose now that these Bishops had not only thought it necessary for themselves but for others too ; this argument you see was ready : you of the uncircumcision who do communicate with us, think that we may be saved though we are circumcised ; but we do not think that you who are not circumcised can be saved, therefore it is the safest way to be circumcised : I suppose you would not have thought their argument good, neither would you have had your children circumcised. But this argument may serve the Presbyterians as well as the Papists. We are indeed very kind to them in our sentences concerning their salvation ; and they are many of them as unkind to us ; If they should argue so as you do, and say, you Episcopal men think we Presbyterians though in errors can be saved, and we say so too : but we think you Episcopal men are Enemies of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ ; and therefore we think you in a damnable condition, therefore it is safer to be a Presbyterian : I know
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not what your men would think of the argument in their hands, I am sure we had reason to complain that we are used very ill on both hands for no other cause but because we are charitable. But it is not our case alone; but the old Catholics were used just so by the Donatists in this very argument, as we are used by your men. The Donatists were so fierce against the Catholics, that they would re-baptize all them who came to their Churches from the other: But the Catholics, as knowing the Donatists did give right Baptism, admitted their Converts to Repentance, but did not re-baptize them. Upon this score, the Donatists triumphed, saying, You Catholics confess our Baptism to be good, and so say we; But we Donatists deny your Baptism to be good; therefore it is safer to be of our side than yours. Now what should the Catholics say or do? Should they lie for God and for Religion, and to serve the ends of Truth say the Donatists Baptism was not good? That they ought not. Should they damn all the Donatists, and make the rent wider? It was too great already. What then? They were quiet, and knew that the Donatists sought advantages by their own fierceness, and trampled upon the others charity; but so they hardened themselves in error, and became evil, because the others were good.

I shall trouble you no further now, but desire you to consider of these things with as much caution as they were written with charity.

Till I hear from you, I shall pray to God to open your heart and your understanding, that you may return from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your first work: Which that you may do, is the hearty desire of

*Your very affectionate
Friend and Servant,*

JER. TAYLOR

F I N I S.